

## Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 SEOUL 10020 290341Z  
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W  
-----126679 290342Z /62

R 290216Z NOV 77  
FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7815

S E C R E T SEOUL 10020

STADIS////////////////////////////////

EXDIS

FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY HOLBROOKE FROM AMBASSADOR SNEIDER

E.O. 11652: XGDS  
TAGS: MOPS, PLOS, KN, US  
SUBJECT: NORTH KOREAN MILITARY SEA BOUNDARY

1. I HAVE JUST LEARNED THAT DOD IS STILL CONSIDERING A  
PROBE OF NORTH KOREA'S 50 MILE MILITARY SEA BOUNDARY TO  
ESTABLISH OUR RIGHT TO USE THE INTERNATIONAL WATERS INVOLVED,  
IN ADVANCE OF THE NEXT LAW OF THE SEA CONFERENCE.

2. WHEN THIS IDEA WAS RAISED A FEW WEEKS AGO WE OPPOSED  
IT ON THE GROUNDS THAT THE APPROPRIATE TIME FOR SUCH A  
REACTION TO THE UNILATERAL NORTH KOREAN DECLARATION WAS  
PAST. I AM STILL OF THAT OPINION. IF WE WERE GOING TO  
ASSERT OUR RIGHT AS MATTER OF PRINCIPLE (RATHER THAN  
NECESSITY) THE TIME TO DO IT WAS IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE NORTH  
KOREAN ANNOUNCEMENT, AND BEFORE PYONGYANG HAD A CHANCE TO  
ENFORCE ITS CLAIM. A CHALLENGE UNDERTAKEN AT PRESENT LOOKS  
MORE LIKE A POLITICAL CHALLENGE TO NORTH KOREA BY THE U.S.  
THAN LIKE AN ASSERTION OF PRINCIPLE, WHATEVER CIRCUITOUS  
ROUTE WE FOLLOW IN CROSSING THE LINE. SUCH A CHALLENGE  
WOULD CUT ACROSS OUR PRESENT COURSE OF SEEKING TO REDUCE

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TENSIONS IN THE AREA. MOREOVER, IT WOULD CARRY THE  
DANGER OF FORCING THE SOVIETS TO SUPPORT THEIR ALLIES IN  
SPITE OF THEIR IRRITATION WITH PYONGYANG'S ACTION IN  
MAKING IT CLAIM. THE RESULT WOULD THUS BE THE OPPOSITE  
OF WHAT IS INTENDED IN THE LOST CONTEXT. BELIEVE THE  
BETTER COURSE WOULD BE TO MAKE OUR POSITION IN THE LOS  
CONFERENCE. WHERE WE MAY STILL RECEIVE SUPPORT FROM SOME

OF PYONGYANG'S NORMAL ALLIES.

3. I HOPE YOU WILL BE ABLE TO WEIGH IN ON THIS ONE TO  
HEAD OFF WHAT COULD TURN OUT TO BE A PRELUDE TO MORE  
SERIOUS DIFFICULTIES.  
SNEIDER

SECRET

NNN

## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** Z  
**Capture Date:** 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** TERRITORIAL SEA LIMIT, MILITARY PLANS  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Sent Date:** 29-Nov-1977 12:00:00 am  
**Decaption Date:** 22 May 2009  
**Decaption Note:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 22 May 2009  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
**Document Number:** 1977SEOUL10020  
**Document Source:** CORE  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** n/a  
**Enclosure:** DOWNGRADE PER 77 SEOUL 10620  
**Executive Order:** X3  
**Errors:** N/A  
**Expiration:**  
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**Office:** ACTION SS  
**Original Classification:** SECRET  
**Original Handling Restrictions:** EXDIS, STADIS  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
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**Page Count:** 2  
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**Previous Classification:** SECRET  
**Previous Handling Restrictions:** EXDIS, STADIS  
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**Retention:** 0  
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**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
**Review Media Identifier:**  
**Review Release Date:** n/a  
**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**SAS ID:** 659515  
**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** NORTH KOREAN MILITARY SEA BOUNDARY  
**TAGS:** MOPS, PLOS, KN, US  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
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**Review Markings:**  
Margaret P. Grafeld  
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**Markings:** Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009